2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Nazir had forgotten or lost the matches entrusted to him, and we could get neither light nor fire. The best part of the time was spent in trying native dodges to obtain a spark, in which D. took an active interest, but the wood was not the right kind, and was, besides, so wet that nothing could be done. Toomhang, the Lepcha, was with us, as he always preferred to be when not actually ordered to keep with and bring up the coolies as he should have done, but we liked gossiping with the fine old man, who was of much too gentle a nature to be a coolie driver. When he told us there would be at least five feet of snow on Tiphu at our last camping ground, by the morning, we knew he was right, and consoled ourselves for all our troubles at the thought of the happy escape we had had."

FLORENCE DONALDSON, 1900.

The roads.

"The *pugdandy* (footpath) now led us up the hill, and the hard climbing we had to do helped to take my thoughts off an experience calculated to unnerve one. In some places we had to scale a projecting rock by means of two pieces of the trunk of a tree with notches at alternate intervals to put one's feet in. This Sikkim style of Jacob's ladder is well enough for the barefooted native, but not at all easy for the leather-shod European. I had looped up my habit skirt before starting, but found it very much in the way all the morning." (But you would probably have found it easier walking in those woollen knickers.)

Ibid.

Sikkim bungalows (old style).

"There were two rooms in the curiously constructed rest-house; the floor and roof being of the same material and as fragile as the walls. We had to take off our boots before we could walk on the yielding floor. Our camp bedsteads would have gone through it, so our bedding was spread on the raised floor which had all the effect of a spring bed,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

though walking about was almost as difficult as on a swinging suspension-bridge. At last we were by ourselves; there was no communication between the two rooms except from the outside, but there were so many chinks in the walls that we thought it advisable to improvise a screen with our rugs and shawls, and then we were able to change our wet clothes and hang them on the many bamboos crossed above the fireplace to be dried and well smoked! We were not a little horrified to find that our feet and ankles were covered with leeches. I got off fairly well, but my husband, who had walked nearly all day, had at least twenty on him. I had knocked two off his neck before, and now he found one in his hair. When empty their bodies were like long black threads about the thickness of vermicelli, but when full of blood they were huge, soft, black lumps. It was most repulsive to have them taken off one. These hill-leeches are much smaller and darker in colour than the domestic leech, but the bite must be poisonous in some way, for, although not felt at the time, they cause considerable irritation of the skin for many weeks afterwards."

Ibid.

Monasteries.

"There is a great similarity in all these buildings, but the Pemiongchi *goompa* is larger than most of them, though the outside seemed less interesting to us, because it had a corrugated iron roof. There were also common glass window-panes round one of the altars. Inside was a great wealth of ugly idols and hideous masks, and it was painful to see our Nepalese coolie prostrating himself with awed face before the latter. Some of the frescoes on the walls were particularly gaudy and revolting; the lamas we saw here were of a low order, and had not the attractive faces we had sometimes met with among these Buddhist priests. To add to the generally unfavourable opinion we had received, some cooking vessels carried by Teptook, and which he had respectfully left at the door when he went in, were stolen,